

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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YMCA Asian Youth Leaders' Conference

From twelve countries, 68 delegates, 13 observers, 13 staff members from Japan, and 13 observers gathered in Shizuoka, Japan for the Asian Youth Leaders' Conference, April 16 - 24. Under the theme: "Forward Together in Faith," the members were concerned with work under four commissions: Boys' Work, Young Adult Program, Relationships, and Extension and Intermovement Aid.

In the first commission, Boys' Work, it was re-affirmed that "Boys! Work should have top priority" but "this priority is not reflected in actual programs and operations." Calling upon all movements to re-center their work upon this objective, individual leaders and centers were asked to seek to develop "Christ-like character" in boys and prepare them "to take their places as useful and responsible citizens." With evident needs for new buildings, enlargements, or repairs, it was yet urged that the basic means for achieving this objective could only be through trained leaders "who in their own lives exemplify Christ-like qualities."

From the second commission, "Young Adult Program," came a report dealing with four areas: Work Among Students, Industrial Youth, Unemployed Youth, and Women and Girls. Noting the "significant and rapid changes" in Asian countries, the commission pointed to common problems

throughout East Asia: lack of housing or study facilities, difficulty in gaining entrance to as well as de-personalization within the university, the religious vacuum, and exploitation of students by political groups. Therefore, the student center and hostel programs must be re-inforced as one means of Christian witness and service to these needs. Other needs which were recognized were the needs for vocational counselling, relating the student to a church, and pioneering in finding a means for leading the student to civic responsibility.

The commission on Relationships urged that as "the Church is the Body of Christ" so "the churches, the YMCA, the YWCA, and other Christian movements are integral parts of that Body," seeking to lead men to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The task of the YMCA groups is both communication with and interpretation to other Christian groups and service within local churches as individual members.

Particular consideration was given to the relationship of the YMCA and the YWCA, since in many Asian countries there has been an increasing demand for co-ed programs, for the admission of women and girls as members of the YMCA, and for a joint program in which one building, one staff, and one Board served for both YMCA and YWCA. Finally the commission studied the relationship between the YMCA and the SCM, proposing co-ordination in common work through a joint leadership training program as well as through relating students in hostels to campus programs where possible.

The fourth commission, Extension and Intermovement Aid, agreed to explore new ways for expanding facilities and staffs, especially in opening new YMCA's. Re-examining its program of mutual aid among and to Asian areas, it was noted that 19 fraternal secretaries from the International Committee are now serving in 10 Asian countries. In many of these countries, grants for particular work have also been received from individual countries. In India, for example, there are at present a grant from Sweden for Religious Work and Boys' Work; a grant from the United Kingdom for Literature Secretary and for Boys' Work; a grant from Australia for Rural Work; and program grants from Germany. Notable among the mutual aid giving are those of Japan (one fraternal secretary to the YMCA and one secretary to the SCM in Brazil; one secretary to the WSCF; money and relief goods to flood victims in Ceylon); Burma (secretary to the Southeast Asia Training Institute); and India (scholarships at Secretarial Training School for Pakistan and Thailand; and at College of Physical Education and in Rural Work).

Addresses at the conference were by Dr. Masao Takenaka (Doshisha University, Japan) who spoke on the function of the YMCA in rapidly changing Asia; Dr. Walter M. Horton of Oberlin School of Theology, U.S.A. and Ernest L. Friend, Milwaukee YMCA, Wisconsin, U.S.A., special representative of the International Committee.

American Baptist Related Churches Form Union

Meeting in general convention in Yokohama on April 28-29, American Baptist missionaries and churches related to or formerly related to the American Baptist group, formed a Union of Baptist Churches. The 105 delegates represented three groups: former American Baptist churches (7) which are at present member churches of the Kyodan; American Baptist related churches (25) which separated from the Kyodan following the war; and the Japan Fellowship of American Baptist Missionaries.

Until the present time the American Baptist Missionaries fellowship has been an associate member of the National Christian Council. But as a result of the newly-formed union, full membership in the National Christian Council was applied for. The NCC in its annual meeting in early May welcomed and approved of this new member.

Three members from each of the participating groups in the union have been named to a committee of co-operation, headed by Mr. Takihiro Yamakita.

Youth Week

The observation by the nation's Christian youth of the NCC sponsored week of prayer, study and worship will occupy the last week of this month. Attractive posters have been circulated and local committees with all denominations cooperating have been busy completing plans. Whether the Sunday beginning the week (May 24) or that ending the week (May 31) will be the occasion for an appeal to youth, through sermons and other means, to recognize their responsibility for the coming century mission. And every church is asked to promote a youth gathering some day during the week. Christian schools are urged to call the students together for a special meeting with local pastors or other Christian leaders. It is hoped such gatherings would appeal to non-Christian in the school community, and that a special effort be made during the week to interest them in attending church. Other meetings, on local and regional level, will include early morning corporate worship, evangelical rallies, social service and Bible study. In these ways, which emphasize ecumenical cooperation, the eyes of the youth of the church will be turned to their special responsibility for the mission of the church in the years ahead.

Curriculum Picture Cards Produced

Recently, the Christian Audio Visual Center (AVACO) produced thirty-four sets of small colored picture cards with scripture texts coordinated with the Kindergarten curriculum of the National Christian Council. These cards, costing less than one third of a cent each, are purchased in sets by churches who wish to distribute the cards each week to each pupil. The thirty-four sets produced so far cover from April through December of 1959, and have been enthusiastically received by the churches. Already some 9,000 sets have been purchased or ordered, assuring the financial success of the series. Churches subscribe to the entire series of 52 cards and a birthday card for less than eighteen cents per pupil. It is anticipated that this will be a regular service of AVACO.

Record of AVACO Chorus to Be Released by Victor

A July release date has been set by the Japan Victor Record Company for the release of a three record album (45 rpm) of familiar hymns recorded by the AVACO Radio Chorus under the direction of Mr. Megumi Iwano. This album, which will sell for ¥2,400 (\$5.70) will include such favorite hymns as "Thy Way, Not Mine, O Lord", "Nearer My God to Thee", "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and "Come Thou Disconsolate". In addition, "Holy, Holy, Holy" and three other hymns are recorded on organ and piano for use by churches which broadcast chime music from their towers before services.

AVACO Building Addition Begun

A contract has been signed with the Fuji Construction Company of Tokyo for the construction of a four story addition to the Christian Audio Visual Center (AVACO) to include over three thousand square feet of additional floor space at a cost of a little over \$20,000. Construction will be carried out from May through the early Fall, and payment will be made at the rate of eight hundred dollars a month over a period of two years. Assistance has been requested from abroad so that AVACO's on-going program will not have to be cut back during this period.

The new space will provide for a photographic darkroom, film production and editing space, a conference room, workspace for the production of non-projected aids as well as for office and storage space needed for the regular aspects of AVACO's growing staff and program.

AVACO's Staff Reaches Forty

The temporary spring influx of new employees prior to the departure of several staff members to new jobs has brought the number of AVACO's employees to a total of forty persons, the highest in its ten year history. The number of staff required to man AVACO's present operation is thirty-five.

Among those newly come to work at AVACO are a graduate from a college department of photography who is a specialist in still photography and art layout, and a graduate of a music school who is an accomplished organist and composes background music for films and sound filmstrips.

TV Film Produced of E. Stanley Jones

A four and one half minute black and white sound film was produced recently in the AVACO studios in which famous evangelist Dr. E. Stanley Jones reported on his evangelistic tour of Japan. This film will be used on television in the United States.

Silk Screen Workshop

On April 17th an all day workshop on the silk screen process, taught by professionals from the Tokyo area, was sponsored jointly by AVACO and the AV Department of the International Christian University. Some twenty students and AVACO staff members attended the workshop.

